

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 02374 01 OF 02 051153Z
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ONY-00 SSO-00 NEAE-00 /022 W
-----025529 051226Z /46

O 051050Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1935

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KATHMANDU 2374

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC, NP
SUBJECT: REPLY TO KING'S LETTER

REF: (A) STATE 113712, (B) STATE 113524, (C) STATE 25964

1. FRANKLY, KING'S LETTER DOES NOT REPEAT NOT STRIKE US AS RATHER SHARP. RATHER OUR REACTION--BOTH IMMEDIATELY AND ON FURTHER REFLECTION--WAS THAT HIS MAJESTY HAS TAKEN THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THE PRESIDENT WITH A FRANK EXPRESSION OF NEPALESE VIEWS--ALL OF WHICH WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE--KEYED TO POINTS WHICH PRESIDENT HAD RAISED IN HIS LETTER TO KING. THIS VIEW WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR DURING PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MEETING WITH CHIRAN THAPA, PRESS SECRETARY TO HM. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, AS NOTED BELOW, AMBASSADOR AND THAPA DID NOT DISCUSS SUBSTANCE OF KING'S LETTER. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT THAT IT APPEARED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE REPLY, THAPA NOTED THAT KING HAD WRITTEN FIRST TO PRESIDENT IN 1977 AFTER LATTER'S ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE AND PRESIDENT HAD RESPONDED--BOTH OF THESE LETTERS RATHER FORMAL IN STYLE. THEN IN JANUARY PRESIDENT HAD KINDLY RENEWED EXCHANGE, THIS TIME IN A MORE INFORMAL BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, SUBSTANTIVE VEIN. THAPA SAID KING BELIEVES THAT HE IN TURN SHOULD SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP OF DIRECT, FRANK DIALOGUE WITH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KATHMA 02374 01 OF 02 051153Z

PRESIDENT--HENCE STYLE AND CONTENT OF LETTER. WE HOPE DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT THIS IS BETTER THAN STERILE EXCHANGE OF CLICHES AND WILL ENCOURAGE RESPONSE IN SAME VEIN.

2. AS FOR SUBSTANCE OF WHAT KING SAID, OUR REACTION IS AS FOLLOWS: (A) OPENING SUBSTANTIVE PARAGRAPH IS CLEARLY HIS MAJESTY'S RESPONSE--ALBEIT AN INDIRECT ONE--TO ROUGHLY

ONE THIRD OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER WHICH WAS DEVOTED TO CONDITION OF B.P. KOIRALA. AS WE HAD TO EXPECT, THIS ASPECT OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER RAISED IN NEPALESE EYES ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL AND COUNTRY'S LEGAL SYSTEM IN PARTICULAR. PERHAPS GON OVERREACTS, BUT IT IS UN- DERSTANDABLY SENSITIVE TO ALL OF THE EXTERNAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO B.P. AND PUZZLED THAT SO LITTLE OF THIS ATTENTION HAS RECOGNIZED THAT LEGAL PROCEEDINGS ON SERIOUS CRIMINAL CHARGES WERE UNDERWAY AGAINST B.P.. IN STRESSING WORKINGS OF NEPALESE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, KING HAS MADE POINT THAT FROM NEPALESE PERSPECTIVE THERE IS MORE THAN ONE SIDE TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN THIS CASE, A POINT HE HAS MADE TO THE AMBASSADOR BEFORE (SEE KATHMANDU 107).

(B) PARAGRAPH ON NARCOTICS IS OF COURSE POINT THAT HAS BEEN MADE REPEATEDLY TO US OVER PAST MONTHS(E.G. GIRI TO AMBASSADOR, 77 KATHMANDU 3278; BISTA TO AMBASSADOR, 77 KATHMANDU 4100; ARYAL TO ATHERTON, 77 STATE 244193). AND AS KING STATES, HE HAS JUST SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME IN AREA WHICH IS MOST AFFECTED--SAME AREA WHERE AMBASSADOR AND AID DIRECTOR WERE HIT UP ON SAME POINT (SEE AGAIN 77 KATHMANDU 4100). KING LEAVES UP IN AIR ISSUE AS TO WHAT THE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE, AND CHIRAN THAPA CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR THAT HM WAS NOT TRYING TO BE SPECIFIC. HE WAS ONLY CITING PROBLEM AND SUGGESTING THAT WE WORK TOGETHER TO SEEK SOLUTIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KATHMA 02374 01 OF 02 051153Z

(C) ON POINTS RE DEMOCRACY AND PANCHAYAT SYSTEM, "IMPOSITION/" FROM OUTSIDE, ETC, KING HAS OF COURSE MNOT MADE ANY DIRECT ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US. BUT HE HAS IN INDIRECT FASHION EXPRESSED WIDELY SHARED CONCERNS ON PART OF GON RE THRUST AND IMPACT OF US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. NEPALESE ARE NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCED THAT US POLICY IS NOT DIRECTED AT TELLING THEM WHAT KING OF POLITICAL SYSTEM THEY SHOULD HAVE--I.E. ONE IN OUR OWN IMAGE. AND THEY ARE SIMILARLY CONCERNED THAT EVEN IF THIS IS NOT OUR INTENT, OUR POLICY MAY ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO FOLLOW SUCH "INTERFERING" COURSE. AGAIN THESE CONCERNS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED TO US BEFORE. HIS MAJESTY HAS SPOKEN MORE THAN ONCE TO AMBASSADOR RE DEMOCRACY AND PANCHAYAT SYSTEM AS RIGHT ANSWER FOR NEPAL (E.G. KATHMANDU 1672) GIRI RAISED ISSUE OF DIFFERING POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN FIRST MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR (KATHMANDU 3278) AND ARYAL CITED TO ATHERTON (77 STATE 244193) NEPAL'S NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE TO WORK OUT PROBLEMS IN ITS OWN WAY.

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 02374 02 OF 02 051158Z

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NEAE-00 /022 W

-----025551 051226Z /43

O 051050Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1936

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KATHMANDU 2374

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3. IN SUM, AS KING STATES IN HIS LAST PARAGRAPH, LITTLE OF WHAT HE HAS SAID IS NEW. INEVITABLY IT IS EXPRESSED IN SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TERMS AND IN SOME CASES FOR FIRST TIME BY HIS MAJESTY HIMSELF. BUT OVERALL, LETTER STRIKES US AS JUST WHAT THAPA SAID WAS INTENDED--A FRANK EXPRESSION OF GON VIEWS ON NUMBER OF ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE HERE (ALL RAISED IN SOME FASHION FIRST BY PRESIDENT), OFFERED WITH INTENT OF ESTABLISHING INFORMAL AND CANDID DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO LEADERS.

4. GIVEN THIS ANALYSIS, WE WOULD HOPE THAT PRESIDENT WOULD REPLY IN SAME SPIRIT. AMONG POINTS WE FEEL SHOULD BE MADE (NOT NECESSARILY IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER) ARE: (A) THAT WE SHARE RESPECT FOR RULE OF LAW, PERHAPS NOTING, AS PRESIDENT JUST DID ON WEST COAST WITH REGARD TO US LEGAL SYSTEM, THAT THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT; (B) THAT WE SHARE HM CONCERN FOR ADVERSE IMPACT OF NARCOTICS LEGISLATION ON RURAL POOR AND THAT WE BELIEVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WHICH WE AND HMG ARE CONCENTRATING ON SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP IN RESPONDING TO PROBLEM; (C) EXPRESS STRONG AGREEMENT WITH HM CONCERN FOR GETTING DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO IMPACT DIRECTLY ON PEOPLE; AND (D) REASSURE HM OF OUR RESPECT FOR NEPAL'S RIGHT TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN POLITICAL SYSTEM WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, REITERATING POINT OFTEN MADE BY PRESIDENT AND OTHERS, THAT OUR DEEP CON-
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PAGE 02 KATHMA 02374 02 OF 02 051158Z

CERN FOR RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE BELIEVE OUR SYSTEM IS ONLY WAY BY WHICH THAT END CAN BE ACHIEVED. CLEARLY, KING WOULD BE DELIGHTED IF

PRESIDENT WERE ABLE TO ACDEPT HIS INVITATION TO VISIT
NEPAL, BUT WE REALIZE THIS IS NOT LIKELY. PERHAPS
LETTER COULD CLOSE, HOWEVER, WITH EXPRESSION OF HOPE
THAT THERE WILL BE OPPORTUNITY SOON FOR TWO LEADERS TO
MEET IN PERSON.
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